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Annual ministerial review: strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development

Letter dated 8 June 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Madagascar to the United Nations and the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

We have the honour to bring to your attention the launch of the Public-Private Alliance Foundation, which took place at United Nations Headquarters on 18 May 2007. Over 120 people, including ambassadors and other government officials, people from the business sector, United Nations officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, chambers of commerce and the media participated in this event, the aim of which was to stimulate a greater awareness of partnerships against poverty, and to take steps to mobilize resources from a wide range of actors.

Among the main challenges facing developing countries are how to build and sustain capacity and how to mobilize and direct it to address the problems of poverty that have been highlighted in the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed principles. In order to deal with these effectively, action and interaction will be required from all parties concerned, including Governments, business, academia, non-governmental organizations and United Nations entities.

The focus of the Public-Private Alliance Foundation on partnerships and a business approach to development is very relevant to the annual ministerial review at the high-level segment of the forthcoming session of the Economic and Social Council. An innovative non-profit organization, the Foundation aims to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals, with special emphasis on goals 1 and 8. The Foundation is a participant in the United Nations Global Compact and promotes South-South and triangular cooperation. It encourages pro-poor business, capacity-building and investments, commerce and related activities for sustainable development.

* E/2007/100 and Corr.1.

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Mr. Daniel Mejia, who chairs the Sunland Group Corporation and also chairs the Board of the Public-Private Alliance Foundation, announced a donation of 100,000 United States dollars to the Foundation at the event on 18 May. Other parties also announced donations, partnerships and business opportunities at the event.

Featured speakers included the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, Léo Mérorès (Haiti); the Executive Head of the United Nations Global Compact; the Chief of the NGO Section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; the Permanent Representative of Madagascar to the United Nations; and Ambassador Francis Lorenzo of the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations.

Representatives of numerous entities spoke of their interest in partnerships and proposed collaboration with the Public-Private Alliance Foundation, including: Classmate PC computers for educational support from Intel; the Open City Portal from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; solar power for farms, schools and businesses from PureTek Inc.; action research on women's remittances, entrepreneurship and microfinance from the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW); ethanol distilleries from TransSeed Corporation; e-governance collaboration with the Division for Public Administration and Development Management of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; action research for clean water from the Patel Center for Global Solutions of the University of South Florida; support to fish farming from the InfoPoverty Institute of the University of Oklahoma; highlighting of the contributions of faith-based community groups from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); after-school programmes from the World Sports Alliance; and financial and other support and collaboration from the Coalition of Hispanic Chambers of Commerce of New York State and its members.

These proposals and commitments will help support, expand and diversify the work already put in motion by the Public-Private Alliance Foundation in several sectors.

The Public-Private Alliance Foundation has its roots in the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development, which is an initiative of the Economic and Social Council that mainly focuses on advocacy, encouragement and reporting on efforts to promote public-private partnerships. Madagascar and the Dominican Republic are pilot countries of that initiative and the first focus countries for the Public-Private Alliance Foundation. Because the Foundation is a non-profit organization, it is in a position to receive and disburse funds from various sources and to take action to build real partnerships with impact on people's lives and livelihoods. The Foundation aims to expand to other countries, and is establishing a board of United Nations ambassadors to provide advice on intergovernmental and national public policy, potential resources and programme implementation.

As is becoming increasingly evident, business that is both profitable and spreads its benefits broadly can have great impact in attacking poverty and building sustainable development. The Public-Private Alliance Foundation is a dynamic part of the growing family of efforts that promote the positive role business can play in promoting development.

We believe that these features deserve attention and encouragement at the first annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council. Accordingly, we would appreciate it if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Council under item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Zina **Andrianarivelo-Razafy**
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